



## Idarubicin (IDR, Idamycin®)

*At the Clinical Center referred to as idarubicin (I-da-RU-be-sin).*

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**How Given:** Intravenously (by vein)

**Drug Action:** Idarubicin prevents cancer cells from growing by binding together or breaking apart the building blocks that form DNA. DNA is the genetic material in cells that is used to make new cells.

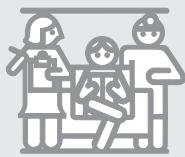
**Side Effects:**

1. Bone marrow effects can include a temporary decrease in white blood cells, platelets, and red blood cells. These usually occur 7 to 14 days after treatment.
2. Nausea and vomiting can occur. These are more likely when idarubicin is taken orally.
3. Stomach cramping and diarrhea can occur.
4. Lip, mouth, and throat sores can begin within 7 days after treatment.
5. Temporary hair thinning or hair loss can occur.
6. Generalized skin rash or rash on hands and feet can occur. Hives may also occur at the injection site.
7. Idarubicin can damage your heart muscle. Tests will be done to monitor this effect.
8. Radiation therapy, given before or after Idarubicin, can cause severe reddening of the skin.

**Special Instructions:**

1. Tell your nurse immediately if the drug stings or burns during treatment. If the drug leaks out of the vein, it can damage tissue. Prompt treatment is needed to minimize damage.

2. Take anti-nausea medication on a schedule as directed, even if you are not having nausea.
3. Idarubicin is orange and can cause your urine to be orange for up to 2 days.
4. Do not take aspirin or aspirin-containing products unless prescribed by your NIH doctor.
5. Protect your skin from sun exposure. Wear protective clothing and use a sunscreen with an SPF rating of 15 or more when in the sun.
6. Call your NIH doctor or nurse if you
  - have any shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, and swelling of hands or ankles
  - are unable to drink for more than 1 day or unable to eat for more than 2 days after treatment
  - have any unusual bleeding or bruising
  - have a temperature of 101.0 °F (38.3 °C) at any time, or have a temperature of at least 100.4 °F (38.0 °C) that lasts for 1 hour or occurs two times in a 24-hour period
  - have diarrhea for more than 2 days
  - have a skin rash, redness or blistering on your hands or feet or in the area treated with radiation
  - have pain, discomfort, or redness at the injection site following treatment



This information is prepared specifically for patients participating in clinical research at the Warren Grant Magnuson Clinical Center at the National Institutes of Health and is not necessarily applicable to individuals who are patients elsewhere. If you have questions about the information presented here, talk to a member of your healthcare team.

Living with Cancer Chemotherapy Series  
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Nursing Department

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